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TWO PEOPLE

On the 40th day after His Birth, Jesus was taken to the Temple according to the law of Moses "to present Him to the Lord." From the first verse of the reading for the day Luke 2:22-40 we get the name for this day The Presentation or the Purification. The law governing the Purification is given in Leviticus 12, where the laws concerning childbirth are given. However, the Church emphasizes the presentation rather than the purification. This can be seen when the prayers and hymns for the services are studied. Other names given to this day are the Meeting of the Lord and the Encounter.

According to the law of the Jewish faith, on the 40th day after the birth of a son he must be brought to the Temple to be consecrated to the Lord. There were two people, who were acknowledged by name, waiting for Jesus in the Temple. These were Simeon, one of the men to whom was intrusted the translation of the Old Testament from the Old Hebrew to the then more prevalent language in use – Greek, and Anna, a prophetess who was up in age and never left the Temple but spent her time there in fasting and in prayer.

Simeon, in the process of translating Isaiah 7:14, came upon the passage: "And this shall be a sign unto you, a virgin, shall give birth to a son, and he shall be called Emmanuel or "God is with us." He was perplexed. Should the word "virgin" be translated as "maiden?" Had the meaning of the word changed? He was stumped and decided to take it to God in prayer. He decided on the word "virgin" and Simeon was then given a promise by the Lord that he would not die until he saw this prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled. This is why he quoted the words: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace..."

Anna, on the other hand, was said to be beside herself with joy. She thanked

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Church of Deposition of Robe
Built 1701 - Moscow
(see chronology)

BLESSING OF CANDLES

In many of our parishes it is traditional to bless candles on the Holy Day of the Meeting of the Lord (February 2/15). It is a memorable moment to come into the church and see big boxes of candles arrayed near the front of the church. It was one of the responsibilities of the church officers to order enough candles for the whole year in time for them to be delivered for this blessing. All the candles used in the church during the year were blessed on the day, if possible.

Following the tradition of their relatives in certain parts of Europe, this day was popularly known as "Hromnice," meaning thunder as candles blessed on this day were taken home and lighted during thunderstorms. In some areas, people brought their own candles to church for the blessing. They decorated them with flowers, icons, and other liturgical symbols. These were of varied colors and made a beautiful display.

The candles are blessed as a symbol taken from the Tropar that "Christ, our God, gives light to those who are in darkness" and from Simeon's prayer said at each Vesper Service taken from

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JUST SHARING

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to swim to a small, desert-like island. The two survivors, not knowing what else to do, agreed that they had no other recourse but to pray to God. However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren.

After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for a wife. The next day another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was a woman, who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing.

Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, more food. The next day, like magic, all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship with his wife and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered.

As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from heaven booming. "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?"

"My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them," the first man answered. "His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything."

"You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked

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News CHRONOLOGY

FEBRUARY 2003

This issue is being mailed around January 18.

CHRISTIANITY constituted the largest religious group worldwide at both the beginning and the end of the 20th century. Islam is the second most populous religion.

THE MOTHER OF GOD CHURCH in Bethlehem suffered severe damage from Israel bombing. A bell weighing over one ton was made in eastern Donetsk in eastern Ukrainia and was shipped in September to be installed in the new bell tower.

ARAMAIC is still spoken in the high mountains and plains of northern Iraq by an ancient minority Christian community. Aramaic was the language spoken by Jesus.

THE MONASTERY IN NOVI-TORZHUK, located on the Tver River, is one of the oldest monasteries in Russia. It was founded by a Carpatho-Russian St. Ephrem of Torzhuk in 1038. He and his brothers, the saints Moses Uhrin and George left their town on the Hungarian border to serve SS Boris and Gleb, the sons of St. Vladimir. SS Moses and George were martyred. The monastery was dedicated to SS Boris and Gleb.

THE RETREAT for young people is planned for June 22-25 at SS Mary and Martha Monastery, 65 Spinner Lane, Wagener, SC 29164.

SPRING BREAK teams, made up of college-aged young adults, will go to various locations to do good works. March 1-8 in Puerto Rico and Guatemala, March 8-15 St. Basil's Academy in New York, Project Mexico and Ionian Village in Greece, March 15-22 the Orphanage in Guatemala, Raphael House in San Francisco and Project Mexico, March 22-29 Puerto Rico and Mexico. Check OCF website at www.ocf.net for updated Real Break information, trip dates and registration.

ON MOUNT ATHOS 100 monks living in the 1000-year-old Esphigmenou Monastery have refused to mention Ecumenical Patriarch Bartolemu in their prayers. They oppose ecumenical union with other Christians. They have been warned by the ruling body of the autonomous monastic community to desist.

OVER 110 ORTHODOX CHURCHES and monasteries have been destroyed and demolished in Kosovo and Metohija since June 1999 when the UN Administration and KFOR peacekeeping forces have arrived. None of the perpetrators of these crimes have been found.

A BRITISH SCHOLAR, who has lived in Ethiopia about 60 years, said that the Ark of the Covenant is to be found in Axum, a three-hour drive from the capital. The Ark is the repository of the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses. On January 19, Epiphany on the Ethiopian Calendar, the faithful renew their vows in the presence of the replicas.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA is being prepared for its 300th anniversary in May 2003. Debra Korluka, an iconographer and icon restorer, is planning a tour from May 9-23 to include some of the festivities. She will have an exhibit of her work in St. Petersburg. Prior to this, previews may be seen in Minneapolis from January 15-27 and Pella, IA from May 1-3. Call 651-439-4850 for info.

THE FUTURE OF THE PO-NASEHMYU language is dim. History has shown that the fate of languages is inextricably linked with the political power of the people who speak it. The people who speak this language have no political power, as they are divided into several countries which change borders and governments frequently.

A MISSION, being started by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Bel Air, MD in Harford County, needs everything to set up for services from Sunday School materials to vestments. Contact Fr. Gregory at 410-588-5885 or fathergmc@juno.com for info.

THE RUSSIAN NAVY has as its new patron saint St. Fedor (Ushakov), who lived from 1744-1817. He was recognized as a saint in 2001. He was an innovative naval commander and was involved in major battles with the Turks and Napoleonic France. His relics have been given to the Baltic, Black Sea and Pacific Fleets.

FEW TOURISTS visit the Church of the Deposition of the Robe in southern Moscow's Shabolovka section. The stately terra-cotta structure, topped by five cupolas, was built in 1701 and was saved from destruction by the fire that raged through Russia Moscow after Napoleon invaded the city in 1812 and during Communist Soviet persecution, which destroyed thousands of churches throughout Russia. The priest, Fr. Vasily Blankovsky, says that a growing number of young people are attending services, as they are looking for direction during the bumpy political and social transition.

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE gather to march twice a year on the anniversary of the death and birth of Czar Nicholas. They wave icons and portraits of the royals and gather in processions and church services throughout Russia. The women wear black babushkas and many men are dressed as Cossack horsemen, who once supported the monarchy.

LETTERS TO FATHER ARISTOTLE is a book by Frank Schaffer, which discusses problems facing our contemporary Orthodox life in America. Among topics covered are the fundamental differences between Orthodox East and Western Christianity, the reason so many second generation Orthodox have left the church, the dangers the church is facing in our secular society, the problem of mixing politics and faith, the trouble with modern translations of the Liturgy, etc. Order for $22.95 plus postage from Regina Press, PO Box 5288, Salisbury, MA 01952. Call toll free for exact cost 800-636-2470.

(Continued from front page)
TWO PEOPLE

God for the privilege of being at the Meeting and was said to speak to everyone of her experience to anyone who came to Jerusalem looking for deliverance from their sins.

There are so many lessons which can be learned from the observance of this day, but certainly one of them is the importance of following the Traditions which are set for us as the parents of Jesus did.

(Continued from front page)
BLESSING OF CANDLES

Luke 3:32: "A light to lighten the Gentiles..."

You might acknowledge this day by having a candle lighted on your supper table and tell your family the connection between the candles and "Jesus, the Light of the World."

(Continued from front page)
JUST SHARING

him. "He had only one prayer which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of my blessings."

"Tell me," the first man asked the voice, "what did he pray for that I should owe him anything?"

"He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

For all we know our blessings are not the fruit of our prayers alone but those of another praying for us.

Fr. Elias Mitchell

(Continued from page 79)
KITCHEN CORNER

minutes. Serve cut into wedges like an ordinary pie. Serve with sour cream and dill.

FILLING:
1 cup cooked meat
1/2 cup minced onion
1 cup cooked rice
3 hard cooked eggs, optional
1 Tbls fresh dill
salt and pepper
beef broth or sour cream

Sauté meat, if raw, until lightly browned. Remove from pan, add onions and butter and saute until transparent but not browned. Combine meat, rice, onions, eggs and seasonings. If mixture is too crumbly, add a little sour cream or beef broth to bind. This may be made ahead of time and refrigerated.

NOTE: I have also enjoyed this when the beef filling is alternated with a sauteed mushroom filling. To make mushroom filling, substitute mushrooms for cooked meat in above filling recipe. You can double the dough recipe and make a full meat and full mushroom filling for a higher Blinchaty Pirog.

STANDING IN CHURCH

A convert to the Orthodox Church once remarked that he could identify the born-to-the-faith Orthodox by the way they stood in church. He said that they stand for hours during the services and don't fidget. This raises the question: Why do the Orthodox stand in prayer? Even though many churches now have pews, the faithful sit only occasionally during the sermon, announcements, etc.

We stand in church during prayer to express our reverence before God and our worship of Him. The sick and elderly are allowed to pray sitting down.

Standing while in prayer is Biblical. We read in Neh 8:6, 7; 9:4, 5 and 2 Chron 29:5, 6, 13, 14 that the congregation of Israel stood in the Temple. In Isa 6:1-2, in 1 Kings 22:19: "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the hosts of heaven standing by Him," in Dan. 7:10 and in Rev. 7:11: "And all the angels stood about the throne and ... worshipped God.", we see that the saints and angels stand in heaven before the Throne of God. Christ also said in Mark 11:25 "When ye stand praying."

A reading for this month (February 16) from Luke 18:10-14 about the Pharisee and Publican says in verse 11 that the Pharisee "stood and prayed" and in verse 13 we are told that the Publican was "standing afar off."

Therefore, Orthodox Christians, according to Biblical and Apostolic tradition, stand throughout the Divine Services and are often reminded to do this by the exclamation: "Let us stand aright."

Standing is the preferred posture for most prayer; however, there are times when we bow or kneel.

THE SHEPHERD OF SHEPHERDS

On February 9 we read the Epistle and Gospel lessons for the Sunday of Zacchaeus by which we begin to enter the threshold of that time of spiritual endeavour which is Great Lent.

In the Epistle 1 Tim 4:9-15, Saint Paul tells Timothy who is young that he should not feel inferior to others because of his youth. It is important to recall that God is not prejudiced as are many people in this world. He regards every person to be just as valuable as if he or she were the only one He had ever created!

The same thing applies to the aged, to women, to blacks, and to every one else who may be different from others in the society in which they live. He regards us all with **respect,** He cherishes and honours us. He guides us and takes care of us. He gives His **full and perfect attention** to our needs and our talents. He **loves us.**

This is why Timothy, the youthful shepherd of his flock, can have full and perfect **confidence** in the One who is the Supreme **Good Shepherd** – Jesus Christ, Who helps him become a model for the faithful. The Good Shepherd helps us as well for we are all precious to Him. We are His children, His most priceless treasures.

Let us regard ourselves and each other in the same way! This will help us to know how we ought to think, speak and act in this world which belongs to our Lord.

Fr. Ihor George Kutash

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Olga Weiss, prayer for health of her sister Stephanie Chmil and Anna Boruck. Christmas Alms from Tim and Mary Goomas in thanksgiving for Matushka Nina Stroyen and continued good health for Fr. St. Andrew in Battle Creek. Christmas gift from Steve and Justyna Pelak. Alexandria Bosko, Helen Lesko, William Soltis, Vestal Publishing Co., Steve and Lenora Evancho in memory of Fr. Basil Stroyen. Olga DeFlorio in memory of Fr. and Matushka Felenchak and James DeFloria, Sr. Lillian Husted in memory of Fr. George and Matushka Anna Cucura and her sister Elizabeth. Claudia Slaby, who underwrote a packet in memory of her mother Stephanie Pawlik's parish Holy Ghost in Manville, NJ. Steve and Leanora Evancho for prayers for the ill: George Mihaly, Dr. Nicholas Libertin, Deborah Mason, Patricia Renchkovsky, and Dr. Richard Majzer and in memory of John and Anna Sulin and Andrew Daymut. Matushka Nina Stroyen prayers requested for Debby, Joe, Tim and Loretta Ann.

AN ALERT (Part 1)

The reading of the gospel about Zaccheus from Luke 19:1-10, which we will hear on February 9 this year, alerts us to the fact that Great Lent will soon be here. Like Zaccheus we want "to see who Jesus was." To accomplish this we must climb higher in a life of fasting, prayer and repentance. The Church helps us toward this goal. It gently leads us through several weeks of gradual change until Great Lent is here and then our dream of "meeting the Resurrection" as it is said in Slavonic.

Zaccheus takes us to the Sunday dedicated to the Publican and Pharisee about whom we can read in Luke 8:10-14 (February 16). They were both religious men but they prayed differently. There are many lessons we can learn from this brief story but the one is that we should not brag about how good we are. We leave this to God. To remind us of this, the Church instructs us not to fast even on Wednesday and Friday for the Pharisee bragged about it. Instead, we should pray the words uttered by the Publican: "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Now that we learn that we are not perfect, we have to take action as did the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32 who realized that he had made the wrong decision in leaving home. He swallowed his pride and returned to his father's house and begged for forgiveness. We are reminded of this need on February 23.

There are two more Sundays in this Pre-Lenten preparation period. The Sunday of the Last Judgement and Forgiveness Sunday which fall in March this year. They will be discussed in "An Alert Part 2" next month.

BABA'S COOKIE JAR

Michael was six when Baba died. He was an active little boy with blue eyes and an impish grin and Baba's only great-grandchild.

At her funeral, Michael asked countless questions about Baba and her new home in heaven with God. The questions were childlike and often repeated, but I found some comfort as I sat with him that day.

The family recently gathered for another funeral. As we sat together at the repast, someone asked Michael, now in his early thirties, if he remembered Baba. His face brightened and he said, "Sure I do." Without hesitation, he added, "I especially remember her cookie jar."

Smiles appeared around the table. What happy memories we all had of Baba's cookie jar! It was really nothing to look at – black, worn, and chipped in places – oh, but what treasures it once held! It was regularly filled with homemade cookies for visiting grandchildren. A plain, chocolate cookie was everyone's favorite.

The cookie jar was not kept on a high shelf out of reach; instead, it was conveniently located on the lowest shelf of the kitchen cupboard where six pairs of little hands carefully lifted it and placed it on the kitchen floor. There the contents could be easily removed and savored by hungry children. We didn't know that Baba often stood behind us silently laughing as we happily munched on the found treasure. Before our visit ended, a container of more cookies was usually provided to be enjoyed at home.

Baba didn't lavish us with expensive gifts or spoil us in any way. We were all expected to behave when we were with her **(especially in church!)** In fact, she would be considered strict as far as grandmother's go, but we didn't mind. Sitting with Baba in her cozy kitchen with a glass of milk and freshly baked cookies was all we needed to know that she loved us.

Not long ago, I was hungry for Baba's chocolate cookies, so I called my aunt for the recipe. Although I enjoy baking, this turned out to be a real chore. The batter was difficult to work with, and the cookies ended up not having the "right" taste. What a disappointment!

Then I thought of Baba. She was a woman who expressed her creativity in the kitchen. A new recipe was viewed as an enjoyable challenge to her. Yet, week after week instead of attempting a new dessert, she made those same plain, chocolate cookies with the sticky dough. Why? Because her grandchildren loved them and that gave her joy. Now, many years later, the memory of that humble cookie jar filled with the homemade cookies is still a precious reminder of Baba's love for us.

As for the cookie jar, it has found a new home with my cousin, Carol. In time, it will hopefully be filled once again with cookies and love for a new generation.

Margaret Pysarchyk

LIGHTER MOMENT

Two older men were talking about the generation gap and they agreed that it had increased in the years since the electric razor has taken over. This caused one of the old-timers to say: "It's the razor strap that helped bridge the generation gap when I was a boy."

STAYING IN TUNE

Years ago, a radio station received a letter from a shepherd who lived on an isolated ranch in the western part of the United States. Never before had the station received such an unusual request. It read: "Will you please strike 'A' on the piano in your studio? I am far from a piano and the only comfort I have is my fiddle. Just now it is out of tune. Will you strike 'A' so that I can get it in tune again?"

Our Orthodox Church also realizes that we can get out of tune with the life we should be living. It is the reason that the pre-Lenten period has been constructed the way it is. The readings are instructive and we especially note the ones following the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee and the readings from 1 John where we read that the strings of our moral conviction, once finely attuned to God's Word, become loose through compromise or neglect. It happens to all of us. And it usually starts with the discord of selfish attitudes and negative thinking. Secret sins rarely distort the tone of outward respectability, but sooner or later an off-key word or deed betray that something is wrong inside.

Daily we need to make sure we are in harmony with God. The Spirit through the Word gives us the sure note to which we can tune our lives. When we are off key, confession retunes us. As we read in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us" and in verse 8 we are warned: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves..." Something to think about when we neglect to have our confessions heard.

You cannot hide your sin from God, He knows what's in your heart; Confession is the quickest way to make a brand-new start.

WHO IS JABEZ?

Some of the best sellers in the last year were books on the prayers of Jabez and souvenir plaques, calendars, etc. with his prayer. Who was he? What was this prayer?

Jabez is mentioned among thousands of names in the genealogy of David given in Chronicles, a book of the Old Testament. The root of the word Chronicles is the same as the one for chronology, which was taken from the Greek word "Khronika," which means annals or time. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible and the genealogy in chapter 1-9 acts as a preamble to the genealogy of Christ in the first books of the New Testament. It contains the most comprehensive genealogical tables in the Bible. They trace the family tree of David from Adam through Noah and to Abraham.

All we could find on Jabez were the few words in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10: "Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain'. And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, 'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, and that I may not cause pain!' So God granted him what he requested."

When we study this prayer of Jabez, it is important to remember that the Giver, the Lord, is more important than the gift. If we focus solely on the request of Jabez, it could be easy to make the mistake of turning it into the formula for obtaining what we want for God. Unfortunately, this is emphasized in the popular books and plaques so readily available.

As we wrote earlier, we don't know much about Jabez except that his mother gave him a name that sounds like the Hebrew word for "distress" or "pain." We're also told that when he grew up, "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers."

What made Jabez "more honorable"? On the basis of his prayer, we may assume that he took his relationship with God seriously. There was no magic in the words of his prayer. Rather, he knew that God is the giver of all things. Jabez was honorable. He honored the Lord.

Our prayer today should be to emulate the character of Jabez, who lived to please God.

WORK AS GOD

The ability to work is a wonderful gift, but are some people taking it too far? In the past, people left their jobs at the office or factory, but now they come home to e-mail and phone messages. Many are so occupied that God and attendance at Church and prayer take place only "if I have time."

A professor of management at a leading university, says: "I don't know whether work is taking over family and community (and church), or whether family and community (and church) are giving up their place to work. But I know the movement is going on. Everyone's job seems to be who they are." We tend to equate identity with what we do as a living. Ask a retired person and he will tell you that he has become an invisible part of society. He has no job identity.

The president of the Families and Work Institute says: "How busy you are has become the red badge of courage... It's become a status symbol," even though people complain about it.

Making a god out of work is not a new problem. In the first commandment, God said: "You shall have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:3) That includes our jobs.

Through God's gift of work, we can honor Him, care for our families, help people in need and attend to our religious life. Work is not to be our main source of fulfillment, that must come from God Himself.

No matter what our occupation, we must keep work in perspective. God and family are more important than dedication to a job. Work is a gift – not a god. Read Ecclesiastes 2:17-26 to help you gain insight.

BIBLE QUIZ

Most Biblical names have specific meanings. Can you name the person who matches the meaning?

1. beloved
2. God has helped
3. he that weeps
4. honored of God
5. gift of the Lord
6. light-giving
7. rock
8. little
9. the Lord has been gracious
10. praise of the Lord

ANSWERS:

1. David
2. Lazarus
3. Job
4. Timothy
5. Matthew
6. Luke
7. Peter
8. Paul
9. John
10. Jude



THE EPITRACHIL

The epitrachil *(stole)* is a liturgical vestment worn by the priests during all liturgical services. The greek word *"epitrachilion"* means *"upon the neck."* It is worn like a scarf over the shoulders of the priest which is adorned with seven crosses: six on the front, one on the back resting on the neck, each representing a Sacrament. It signifies the double portion of grace bestowed on a priest. In contemporary Eastern practice, it is joined together in the front, while in the Western tradition it remains open. Its color reflects the liturgical year.

As the priest vests for each Divine Liturgy, he blesses the stole, kisses the small cross on the neck and puts it on while saying, "Blessed is God, Who pours out grace upon His priests, as oil of myrrh upon the head, which runs down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runs down to the fringe of His garment." *(Psalm 133:2)*

One must be ordained to wear it; it does not have special powers in itself. It is presented to a newly-ordained priest by the bishop while he says, "Axios!" *(He is worthy!").*

No Sacrament may be performed without it. In Confession, the priest places it over the head or shoulders of the penitent. It witnesses the repentance and forgiveness of sins. It bears heavy upon the shoulders of the priest. It is worn vertically like a ladder that leads to heaven. In many traditions it is kissed by the penitent after confession as a sign of respect for the confessor and the priesthood. In marriage, the newly-united couple hold the end of it while processing around the tetrapod three times; in baptism, the godparents of the child do the same. One embracing the Faith from another Christian confession is lead into the nave with it indicating that it is Christ and the Holy Spirit who leads us into the safe harbor of the Church. A new mother is escorted lovingly back into the church with it during the service of "Churching" forty days after the birth of her child.

The spiritual significance of the stole has meaning for all believers. The stole is an integral part of the liturgical worship in the Orthodox Church. While it has taken on various styles throughout the centuries, the meaning has remained the same: the yoke of Christ *(Matthew 11:29-30)* that every believer shares and must accept freely. It is an awesome responsibility and honor to wear this sacred vestment.

Raymond J. Mastroberte
Iconographer

WINTER'S GRACE

If anyone wants to become one of the 24,000 licensed taxi drivers in London, they have to do a lot of studying. The only way they can get behind the wheel is to master The Blue Book, the single manual for a course that takes between two to four years to complete.

It may take only a few minutes for the driver of a traditional black cab to take you from one point to another – but knowing how to get there requires years of purposeful study.

The apostle Paul (in our reading for the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, 2 Tim 3:10-15) reminded Timothy of the importance of knowing God's Word and of carefully and diligently carrying out his ministry of teaching others. The goal of such teaching is not just learning, but Christ-like living. St. Paul advised him: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife." (22-23)

And St. Paul reminds us (v. 14) "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou has learned them."

Let's make time to study God's Word with diligence and purpose. And let's take time to pray that what we learn will result in God-honoring behaviour that points others to Christ. And let us continue in the traditions which our parents have taught us.

It does little good to know the best route to follow if we never get on the road.

Undique (from everywhere)

President Lincoln had a terrible burden to bear of a nation being torn apart and the Union being threatened; he took action, he invited all to pray to God. We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in number, wealth, and powers as no other nations have ever grown. But we have forgotten God! Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God Who made us."

This month we are being reacquainted with the Parables of the Publican and the Pharisee and The Prodigal Son. They will only be nice stories that Jesus told unless we internalize them. We must ask ourselves which of the characters in the parables can we identify with? Which of the two men who were praying in the temple? Which of the three in the other parable: the repentant or jealous son or the forgiving father?

Some saints have become patrons of occult groups and their icons are used during pagan rites, coven gatherings and the like. For example, SS. Lazarus and Barbara are favorites of the Afro-Caribbean Santeria while St. Brigid and St. Walburga are preferred by Wicca and Daughters of the Flame.

The icon corner in the Orthodox home is usually in the main room of the house. Here are placed an icon, a lamp or vigil light, the prayer books, bibles, holy water, etc. The family members pray before this icon. It is also referred to as the family altar or "krasne ugolok" beautiful corner in Russian.

Studying the lives of the saints evokes in the souls of Christians something of that strength and courage that is required to give one's life for the faith.

Your piano is in tune if when you simultaneously play the "F" and "A" notes above middle "C" they compare to the dial tone of a telephone.

The bishop carries a set of candles in each hand while giving a blessing during services. The two candles in one hand symbolize the two natures of Christ, the three candles in the other symbolize the Holy Trinity. The candles are fastened and do not stand alone.



Editor's Notes

As I look out of the window, I notice that the blue spruce which I planted about twenty years ago is starting to dry out from the lower branches and only the few top branches are still a bright bluish green. What disease is affecting the tree? Can anything be done to restore the tree to its former strength and beauty? What is going to happen to it? Is there an analogy between my blue spruce and the church? Are parishes drying out and losing their strength and the disease spreading upward?

Every so often, it is time to take stock, whether it is of our financial situation or of our spiritual life or just life in general. This certainly is the time when our church puts us on alert as far as our spiritual life is concerned. As we take action in that area, it is also time that we look over **The Orthodox Herald**. How can it be improved to make it more useful to its readers in their spiritual and religious lives? To this end, we ask our readers which features they find most interesting and useful and which they feel can be eliminated. Perhaps there are new ones we should add. Help us, please, in this evaluation.

I do appreciate all the donations which have and are being sent to the Fr. Basil Library Fund. Unfortunately, the address was not complete in a past issue of the "Herald" and some checks are being missent. The full address is: Attorney Basil G. Russin, 1575 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort, PA 18704.

I have been reminded that for those of a Russian background it would be more correct to speak of Day of Angel rather than Name Day. It is a more accurate translation of "Den Angela" but it is somewhat awkward in English.

Many years ago, Fr. Basil started Prayer Friends Program in his parish. It was well received and I know that I was enriched by participating in this each Great Lent. Prior to the beginning of Great Lent on Zacchaeus Sunday a "prayer box" was placed in the entrance of the church. Those who wished to participate in the program, placed their name in the box. On Cheesefare Sunday, names were drawn from the box. Each person pledges to pray for their "prayer friend" daily throughout the Lenten Season. Prayer friends remain secret until the day of Resurrection when they are greeted with the Resurrection greeting and given a blessed egg. If you want more information, call me at 570/256-7232.

Again, I want to thank you for your letters, cards of sympathy and greetings of the Nativity and for your phone calls. Your prayers are a strength to me. I feel them surrounding me.

God be with you,

Matushka Nina

GUIDELINES FOR FASTING

One of my non-Orthodox friends told me: "There is an advantage to following the rules for fasting in the Orthodox Church – you never have any meat in the freezer that is over a year old." She knows that this is the time of year when I start to empty all meat and meat products from my freezer and I start to make strange combinations of food.

The week between the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee – February 16-23 – helps me as it is a Fast-Free Week. This means that I serve meat even on Wednesdays and Fridays. The Church allows this so that we don't fall into the sin of pride like the Pharisee did who bragged that: "I fast twice a week." (Luke 18:12)

The week which follows between Meat-Fare and Forgiveness Sundays (March 2-9) we give up meat. However, we are allowed eggs, cheese and other dairy products even on Wednesday and Friday.

Great Fast begins on Monday, March 10, with its strict fast and its restrictions on quantity and type of foods we eat.



I was served a most impressive meat pie by Matushka Puzanov in a little house resembling a Hansel and Gretel house in the Tanaus Mountains in Germany. It was brought out on a platter surrounded by a colorful frame of deviled eggs. The pie looked like a many layered torte. It was called a Blinchaty pirog. Meeting a Mennonite friend later, I found that they made this also but it had the colorful name of Komm Morgen Wieder (Come again tomorrow). She said that her people learned to make this when they lived in Russia many years ago. After baking, ice the pie with sour cream and sprinkle with fresh dill or serve the sour cream/dill mixture in a separate bowl. Also good with a white sauce. Here is a simple version.

BLINCHATY PIROG
STACKED MEAT PIE

BLINI OR PANCAKE DOUGH

1 cup flour	3 eggs
1/2 tsp. salt	1 cup milk
1/2 tsp. baking powder	1 Tbls melted butter

Mix flour, salt and baking powder. Beat eggs and milk. Add flour and mix well. Refrigerate up to 2 hours so that the flour particles have time to soften, making a lighter pancake. If batter is too thick, add a bit more milk. Heat skillet over low heat. Add very little butter. Pour small amount of batter into pan and immediately spread it by tilting the pan. There should be just enough batter to coat the surface of the pan. The pan should not be so hot or the batter will cook before you can spread it. Fry on one side only. Place browned side down in a buttered cake pan. Brush with melted butter and cover with layer of meat filling. Continue stacking. The top level should be a pancake, browned side up. At this point, you may cover the pie with foil and refrigerate until you are ready to serve it or put immediately into a 350° oven, covered loosely with foil and bake until hot, about 15

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Hunlock Creek, PA 18621

PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID

Father, help me in my low moments to look up to You.

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ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Marea,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shitko, OK noh yah mala takee exciting experience. Tak peeshlo.

Me husband barz badrooyeh meneh to get a new image. Yah neh interested boh yah like myself yak yah am. Noh finally yah peeshla nah diet, yah loosovala weight, yah poh paintovala hair, peeshla shopping eh bought new style clothes, dostala makeup consultation, ee finally noveh hairdo. E tak dostala new image.

But what happened is yah neh znam chej me husband like new Hanya cheh staru Hanyu. Me peeshleh doh supermarket. Me maleh takee big order zheh yah ee husband malee separate carts. Yah poking around vegetables ah me husband peesho do dairy counter. Kolee he came looking for me yah talking do takoho shumnoho cheloveka. Me husband glared Ohn did not like it!

Kolee me come back home, Yah put groceries away ee went nah back patio dostatee some fresh air boh me husband takee sullen. Ah things peshlee worse. Me next door neighbor, Al was on his patio ee crechit doh meneh, Hi, beautiful!" Of course, me staree heard boh ohn stoyal kolo window watching me – his new Hanya!

That evening, nah supper time, me husband kaseeh do meneh zhe yah moshuy relax a bit, eat a bit more – treat myself boh yah dieting so long and good.

Yah dumam zhe ohn hotcheh staryu Hanyu back, Domayteh zhe me husband a little jealous?

Budte zdrove,
Maybe will remain Nova Hanya

Home Bible Reading Schedule

FEBURARY 2003

1	Thess 5:14-23	15	2 Tim 2:11-19
2	**1 Tim 1:15-17**	**16**	**2 Tim 3:10-15**
3	James 2:14-26	17	2 Peter 1:20-2:9
4	James 3:1-10	18	2 Peter 2:9-22
5	James 3:11-4:6	19	2 Peter 3:1-18
6	James 4:7-5:9	20	1 John 1:8-2:6
7	1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12	21	1 John 2:7-17
		22	2 Tim 3:1-9
8	1 Thess 5:14-23	**23**	**1 Cor 6:12-20**
9	**1 Tim 4:9-15**	24	1 John 2:18-3:10
10	1 Peter 2:21-3:9	25	1 John 3:11-20
11	1 Peter 3:10-22	26	1 John 3:21-4:6
12	1 Peter 4:1-11	27	1 John 4:40-5:21
13	1 Peter 4:12-5:5	28	2 John 1:1-13
14	2 Peter 1:1-10		

BIBLE STUDY

The readings for this month are taken from books with which we are not too familiar. It is interesting that they were chosen to be read during this pre-Lenten season as they were written to those converts to Christianity who lived away from the Holy Lands. The writers felt that due to their isolation from the centers of Christianity they were prone to being influenced by false teachings and the corrupt society in which they were living. Perhaps those of us who are living a distance away from our churches and certainly in a society which is morally bankrupt should pay special attention to these readings.

I recently saw a plaque in a catalogue which read: "You love Jesus only as much as you love the person you love the least." The words had a familiar ring and I found them in 1 John 4:20: "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

In 1 John 4:10, we learn that the key to knowing love isn't found in our love for God, but rather in His love for us. He showed the depth of His love in Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins. That's our example. "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (v.11)

When we fail to love others, we should seek God's forgiveness and ask Him to help us show others the kind of love He showed to us.

Do you long to love God more? Start with loving the people around you. "Unfailing is God's matchless love, so kind, so pure, so true; and those who draw upon that love show Christ in all they do."

PEACE OF SOUL

We all strive to be peaceful in the sense of having peace in our soul. Those who have acquired peace of soul can be in constant motion or busyness or in pain, but their souls being united closely to God remains in unshakable peace.

St. Seraphim of Sarov teaches: "we must endeavor by every means to keep peace of soul. Do not be troubled by the insults or slights of other people. It is necessary at all costs to restrain oneself from anger and by watchfulness over oneself to keep the mind and heart from vain movement... For the guarding of peace of our souls, it is also necessary to restrain ourselves and flee from judging others. By being non-judgmental and being silent, our peace of soul will be preserved. When a person attains this state of mind, he receives divine revelation... We must keep our hearts from vain thoughts and impressions (Proverbs 4:23). By constant watchfulness over the heart, a purity of heart is born in which God is seen, according to the words of eternal truth given in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

St. Nikolai